

Government “Future Partnership” paper – Foreign policy, defence and development

On this website, we have expressed our concern that the Government shows no desire to disentangle ourselves from EU defence policy on Brexit. This latest Government paper has done nothing to alleviate our worries. Rather than provide our own assessment of this paper, we are reproducing (with permission) the comments of David Banks from *Veterans for Britain*.

DExEU's defence partnership paper is a grave mistake and gives the EU control

A Norway-style abdication of defence powers would betray British voters, senior military veterans say today.

It is in response to a DExEU paper which calls for a defence relationship with the EU “closer than a third country”.

One other country currently fulfills the EU's criteria for ‘closer than a third country’ and that is Norway, which has submitted itself to EU Common Defence Policy, EU defence industry directives, membership of the European Defence Agency and the growing impact of Juncker's European Defence Action Plan.

The DExEU paper proposes keeping the UK locked into

structures, policies and financial schemes of the new EU 'Defence Union' that are scheduled to pass increasing amounts of control to the EU after 2017. It poses a major threat to the Five Eyes Intelligence Alliance with the Anglosphere and will certainly alienate the Americans

The DExEU paper, which is in fact the product of FCO and MOD civil servants, comes after 10 months of EU agreements in defence which were hardly noticed by UK MPs and media because UK participation and consent was not thought relevant to the departing UK.

"Britain is walking into a carefully planned EU ambush from which UK officials have not protected us. We would ask MPs, ministers and defence observers to urgently read through the 100,000+ words of EU plans, advisory notes and EU Council agreements completed since the Brexit vote. All of this, which has virtually bypassed MPs on the understanding that we are leaving, is now suddenly and desperately relevant to the United Kingdom," said **Major-General Julian Thompson, chairman of Veterans for Britain and Royal Marines Veteran who commanded landing of British troops on the Falklands Conflict.**

British voters have always been more opposed to an EU role over their defence than any other issue. Polls have consistently shown that public support for UK control over defence is much greater even than the majority who want to leave the EU.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. What recent EU Defence Union agreements mean
2. Problems for the UK 'closer than third country' submission to it
3. Ministerial statements about EU Defence Union
4. Additional comments from **Professor Gwythian Prins, Rear-Admiral Roger Lane-Nott and Colonel Richard Kemp**

1. What recent EU agreements mean

1. EU Defence Union is framed in five separate EU Council agreements between 14 November 2016 and 22 June 2017, relating to the Security and Defence Implementation Plan (Mogherini) and the European Defence Action Plan (Juncker).
2. The UK is a full participating signatory to the EU Council agreements.
3. A further informal meeting on Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the final component of Defence Union, was held on Thursday in Estonia where the UK representative also indicated complete agreement. A binding EU Council meeting of defence ministers is to be held in October 2017 and the EU Commission expects to begin PESCO i.e. an EU Army in all but name, before the end of 2017.
4. The agreements cover:
 1. Four new sources of military finance including the European Defence Fund.
 2. There are also plans on space, intelligence, UAVs and marine drones.
 3. Military technology will lead to joint purchasing and ownership of assets and these assets will be governed by joint policy.
 4. Strategic direction, decision making and physical command centres.
 5. Defence research.
 6. MPs are STILL unaware and have not debated or agreed to most of this. Only one part was discussed, that was the European Defence Fund – 10 weeks AFTER it was agreed by UK officials at the EU.

2. The problems created by UK adherence to EU defence

1. Harm Five Eyes relationship. UK is asked under SDIP to propose ways to plug UK into SIAC, the EU's military intelligence command. (Single

Intelligence Analysis Capacity)

2. Loss of control over growing areas of defence policy. The DExEU paper describe actively delegating growing areas of decision-making over UK defence policy to the wider EU. It also submits the UK to gradual EU integration in intelligence, ownership of assets, defence procurement, research, growing elements of funding and strategic direction to collective decision-making over time in all these areas: intelligence, asset development, budgeting, research, asset purchase, asset ownership,**as described in the EU Council agreements the UK has agreed since November 2016.**
3. Decision making and participation would be on EU terms. The UK would be submitting to EU control of budgets, research, assets, policy.

1. Defence procurement.

1. EU Defence procurement directives mean cheapest EU-wide tender for government contracts.
 2. UK shipyards and defence firms have relied on a national security exemption where UK gov can restrict contracts to UK suppliers – which the EU has just clamped down on.
 3. It is also subject to the gradually tightening and the latest EU moves via the European Defence Action Plan.
 4. The Type 26 Frigate adheres to EU rules and EDA benchmarks.
 5. The National Shipbuilding Strategy commits to build only frigates, destroyers and submarines in the UK. All other types including patrol, RFA, LPDs are to be open to international tender..
4. Tied in in defence research project PADR

(Preparatory Action on Defence Research), which the MOD started to push in June **and which requires long-term UK adherence to EU rules.**

5. The US will be upset by EU protectionism in its emerging EDTIB. The UK is collaborating in its creation. (European Defence Technology Industrial Base

3. Ministerial statements about EU Defence Union

What ministers have committed to:

13 December 2016: "Government supported much of the content of the Mogherini Security and Defence Implementation Plan" <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmeuleg/71-xxii/7112.htm>

8 June 2017: UK pushing companies towards EU deals that require long-term adherence to EU policy, CSDP, EDA <https://twitter.com/VeteransBritain/status/905551231195779076>

22 February 2017: Minister regards European Defence Action Plan as "predominantly positive for member state capabilities and the UK defence industry" <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmeuleg/71-xxxiv/7114.htm>

22 February 2017: Minister expects UK adherence to EU defence directives to continue: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmeuleg/71-xxxiv/7114.htm>

7 September 2017: National Shipbuilding Strategy submits the UK to EU rules

<https://twitter.com/VeteransBritain/status/905439206473945090>

4. Additional comments

Ministers in charge of exiting the EU are being advised by people who wrote defence integration agenda of Blair, people who have worked and still work under Federica Mogherini and people who simultaneously work for MOD and the European Defence Agency. The British public would be shocked by the conflicts of interest of people advising ministers and people in this country. The British people do not want to surrender defence autonomy to the EU.

This DExEU paper is not a bargaining hand. It means giving the EU the deck of cards.

The last 10 months of agreements spell out where the EU is going. Offering continued UK compliance to these agreements means submitting to their evolving nature and increasingly to the will of collective decision making in everything from finance to deployment, instead of UK government decision making within NATO.

Ministers need officials who are willing to spell out the full EU agenda here and what the UK would lose in democratic control – not just pass on the warm words used by Brussels.

Instead of promising more giveaways, ministers should be working out how the UK can extricate itself from these unnecessary commitments.

Based on a misperception that the EU is a benevolent a-la-carte club.

In loose language, it alludes to “a defence relationship with the EU that’s closer than any third country” – in other words, the continuation of the mess that officials from FCO and MOD have created in the last 12 months.

– **Rear-Admiral Roger Lane-Nott, former chief of staff, submarines.**

We have NATO and EU efforts to establish decision making

authority or to have its own structures threatens the transatlantic alliance.

Submitting to EU defence plans also lets down the UK's closest allies including the US – it means supporting the EU's plans for the protectionist EDTIB (European Defence Technology Industrial Base) which seeks “EU sovereignty” in defence assets and whose new defence research network actively blocks US and Canadian companies from participating.

In simple democratic terms, if the public were fully aware of what “closer than third country” actually means they would never agree to it. Nor would they agree with the ministerial statements of the last 10 months in reference to them. Our ministers seem to be walking blindly into a well prepare EU ambush of just the sort Yanis Varoufakis the sacked Greek finance minister has been repeatedly warning us.” –**Professor Gwythian Prins,**

“The paper will talk about a defence relationship ‘closer than any third country’. BUT IN PLAIN WORDS THAT amounts to the UK staying in the recently agreed EU Defence Union agreements just as Norway has agreed to do. Also, just like Norway, it means the UK submitting to EU common defence policy, EU defence directives and European Defence Agency membership, which are all conditions the EU has placed on the UK for this kind of arrangement. This is all dangerous and puts the UK on a trajectory to EU defence union.

“It puts control of our future direction, strategy and even foreign policy squarely into the hands of the EU. This is in any case unnecessary because our defence relationship with EU member states should instead be conducted via NATO. The EU has declared defence autonomy from NATO.

“UK ministers consented to defence union agreements after the Brexit vote and we were told that it was because the UK would have no part in them. Yet the government is now allowing these gradual and erosive commitments to the EU to stand. It means a

hollowing out of UK Parliamentary authority over UK defence particularly BY STEALTH where defence procurement and the collective ownership of assets are concerned. The EU has put in place policy which dictates that collectively-owned assets on land, air, sea and space are also subject collective policy. The collective nature of defence assets and policy is at present only conceptual but it is agreed and is timetabled to be vast within just a few years.” – **Colonel Richard Kemp, former commander of British Forces, Afghanistan**

We in the Campaign for an Independent Britain will seek to work with organisations like Veterans for Britain in opposition to these plans to lock us into the EU's defence agenda after Brexit. IN this area, Brexit must be as “hard” as possible.